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A

SERMON

Preached at

BLOCKLEY

IN

Worcestershire

UPON THE

Thanksgiving-day.

Sept. 9th. 1683.

By *Samuel Scattergood*, M. A. Vicar of *Blockley*, and late Fellow of *Trinity College* in *Cambridge*.

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PSALM 64. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

They encourage themſelves in an evil matter: they commune of laying ſnares privily; they ſay, Who ſhall ſee them? They ſearch out iniquities, they accompliſh a diligent ſearch: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart is deep. But God ſhall ſhoot at them with an arrow, ſuddenly ſhall they be wounded. So they ſhall make their own tongue to fall upon themſelves: all that ſee them ſhall flee away. And all men ſhall fear, and ſhall declare the work of God: for they ſhall wiſely conſider of his doing. The righteous ſhall be glad in the Lord, and ſhall truſt in him, and all the upright in heart ſhall glory.

WE are this day aſſembled together to pay the tribute of our devouteſt praiſe and thanks to Almighty God, as for the lateſt, ſo, perhaps, for the greateſt Deliverance that ever he hath wrought for

this Church and Nation. 'Tis the onely tribute this which a Creature can pay to his Creatour, and 'tis that which our Creatour daily expects from us, and which he declares to be highly acceptable and well pleasing in his sight; *Whoso offereth me praise*, saith he, *glorifieth me.* Psal. 50. 23. But though this duty be continually to be performed by us, and (as the Apostle exhorts us, *Eph.* 5. 20.) we ought to *give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*; forasmuch as every day, every hour, we partake of his goodness, and taste of his mercy and loving kindness: yet then is it especially and most indispensably necessary, when by shewing some signal and extraordinary favour toward us God himself calls for it, as it were by a voice from Heaven. And this is our present case; every minute circumstance of which we have described to us, and presented to the life in this portion of Scripture.

I. Here is our danger that threatned us. Cursed Sons of *Belial* combine together, and contrive an Hellish Plot to destroy us. *They*

They encourage themſelves in an evil matter, &c.

II. Here is God's gratious deliverance from this danger. *But God ſhall ſhoot at them with an arrow*, &c.

III. Here is our duty thereupon. *All men ſhall fear*, &c. Theſe are the things which my Text offers to our conſideration: of which in order.

And firſt, Here is a Plot contrived to deſtroy us. *They encourage themſelves in an evil matter: they commune of laying ſnares privily; they ſay, Who ſhall ſee them? They ſearch out iniquities; they accompliſh a diligent ſearch: both the inward thought of every one of them and the heart is deep.* Which words contain a moſt exact deſcription of the methods and devices which cunning and malitious Traytors make uſe of in contriving and managing the moſt execrable and deviliſh Plots and Conſpiracies for the Subverſion of the Government under which they live. The Pſalmiſt here traces their footſteps all along, purſues them from their infancy to their maturity, from their firſt trembling initiation into Sedition, through all their ſecret whiſperings and murmurings, their ſtollen Cabals and Conventicles, untill they

they are become Maſters of the Myſteries of Treaſon, and are ripe fruit for the accurſed Tree. And ſo I ſhall endeavour to expoſe them to your view in the ſame method that the Royal Prophet hath preſcribed to us. And Firſt, *They encourage themſelves in an evil matter.* Though it be moſt true that all men are conceived and born in ſin; yet it is as true that no man can all of a ſudden, and as it were in a moment, become a complete ſinner, and arrive at the height and perfection of Wickedneſs and Villany. But though that ſecret infection which the ſin of our firſt Parents hath conveyed to all their poſterity (if it be not ſubdued and reſtrained by the grace of God) be ſtrong enough, and ſure enough, to bring any man to Hell, by breaking out into common and ordinary ſins, which (unrepented of) will certainly lead him to *the chambers of death:* yet to become one of Satan's principal Agents, one of the chief Miniſters of State in the Kingdom of Darkneſs; this requires Pains and Sweat; and he muſt ſerve a moſt inſufferable Apprenticeſhip that will attain to it: and whoſoever will embarque his Soul on this manner for Hell (eſpecially if he hath been born and bred in a Chri-

a Christian Church) must endure many sad conflicts and storms in his Conscience, before he can thoroughly make shipwreck of his faith, and fit himself for the desperate attempts of so fatal a voyage. When the Prophet *Elisha* told *Hazael* what cruelty he should shew toward the Children of *Israel* (2 *King.* 8.) that he should *set their strong holds on fire, and should slay their young men with the sword, and dash their children, and rip up their women with child,* he answers him, as if he were astonished at such actions; *What,* saith he, *is thy servant a dog, that he should doe this great thing!* And yet he did doe it afterwards, as the story shews us. And so likewise it is not at all improbable but the most bloudy minded of all the Traytours that were concerned in this late Conspiracy, should a man have surprized him on a sudden, and asked him, If he would undertake to stab the King, or to fire a Blunderbus in his Face, before he had been fitly prepared to hearken to such proposals, would have rejected the thing with horrour, and have lookt upon it to be compared with *Nero's* insatiable thirst after bloud, when he wished that the people of *Rome* had but one neck, that

that he might deſtroy them all at a blow. For though a man muſt be beholding to a tender Conſcience, and to the aſſiſtence of the Divine Grace to preſerve him from ſmaller ſins, and to enable him to *abſtain from all appearance of evil*; yet ſuch horrid crimes as this of Treaſon, Aſſaſſinating Kings, and ruining Kingdoms, and procuring the deſtruction of (perhaps) more than an hundred thouſand innocent perſons in a moment; I ſay, ſuch villany as this looks ſo dreadfull and ghaſtly, that even common humanity ſtartles at the ſight of it, as if Hell it ſelf were open to its view, and it had a full proſpect of the terrours of the Infernal pit: and therefore it is not to be propounded to any perſons but ſuch as by a previous preparation are duly fitted and qualified for it. And ſo *David* tells us here that the Conſpiratours lay their deſigns accordingly; and the beginning and riſe of all Plots is this, *They encourage themſelves in an evil matter.* Thoſe that are already thoroughly diſpoſed for Treaſon themſelves, that they may draw others into their confederacy, labour to poſſeſs them with an ill opinion of the Government; and, that the infection may ſpread it ſelf the faſter

through

through all parts of the Kingdom, they cauſe lying and ſeditious Pamphlets and Libels to be diſperſed abroad, to defame the King and his Council, and to terrifie the hearts of the credulous Vulgar with groundleſs Fears and Jealouſies. By ſuch ſtrategems as theſe, together with the help of the Pulpit Incendiaries, that forced the Goſpel of Peace to ſound an Alarm of War, and to command Rebellion inſtead of Obedience, did this unhappy Nation lately loſe its King, its Liberty, and its Religion, and was reduced to moſt wretched Slavery under Tyranny, Schiſm and Hereſie. And in the very ſame manner was this laſt Conſpiracy begun, fomented and carried on; and as direfull effects would it certainly have produced, had not God been gratiouſly pleaſed to diſcover it, and (I hope) utterly to defeat and confound it: and the Morning Star is not a more infallible ſign of approaching day than ſuch methods as theſe are of Plots and Treaſon being in agitation. By this means it comes to paſs that the Mouths of the Common people are opened, and, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it at the third verſe of this Pſalm, *They whet their tongue like a ſword, and bend their bows to ſhoot their arrows,*

even bitter words againſt thoſe Governours; againſt whom they ought not to frame ſo much as an evil thought: and every pragmatical Fop, that perhaps hath not brains ſufficient to make a good Conſtable, takes upon him to be a mighty Politician, and arraigns and cenſures the moſt prudent and adviſed proceedings of the King and his Council. And while they that *ſtudy to be quiet, and to doe their own buſineſs*, leaving the management of State-affairs to thoſe perſons with whom God hath entruſted them, are lookt upon to be Betrayers of the Subjects Liberty, they onely cry themſelves up for the zealous Aſſerters of it who moſt evidently ſhew that they deſign to invade it, by trampling upon the Laws both of the Goſpel and the King, and in defiance of the former boldly calumniate and revile the latter, *deſpiſing Dominion, and ſpeaking evil of Dignities.* And thus much of the firſt ſtep towards Treaſon mentioned in my Text, and 'tis no ſmall one neither: *They encourage themſelves in an evil matter*, by mooting ſometimes upon a Caſe of Treaſon, and letting their tongues looſe to talk ſeditiouſly againſt the Government.

And

And whoſoever hath learnt this leſſon well is in a fair way to proceed farther: and he that hath conceived an ill opinion of the King and his Government, that finds himſelf uneaſie under it, and dares openly declare theſe ſentiments of his to others, muſt needs be ſuppoſed to be inclinable to engage in any deſign by which he may have any probable hopes to mend his condition; and will doubtleſs lend his helping hand, or head, or purſe, or perhaps all of them rather than fail, to free himſelf from that yoke with which he is pinched. And this is the direct method of the Traytors here in my Text. After they have ſufficiently *encouraged themſelves in an evil matter* by their factious and ſeditious diſcourſes, and begin thoroughly to underſtand themſelves, and find that they are all birds of the ſame feather, all Murmurers and Complainers alike, afflicted with the ſame Grievances, and unanimouſly agreed upon the ſame Verdict againſt the Government, we need not wonder if the next news we hear of them be, That they are entring into Solemn Leagues and Covenants, and Aſſociations; that they are con-

triving Plots and Conſpiracies, and that *They commune of laying ſnares privily, and ſay, Who ſhall ſee them?* Thus *Abſalom* after he hath alienated the hearts of the people of *Iſrael* from King *David*, and ſtollen them unto himſelf, preſently heads the Faction that he hath raiſed; cauſes himſelf to be proclaimed King in *Hebron*, and conſults with *Ahitophel* how to murther his Father *David*, and to poſſeſs himſelf of his Crown and Kingdom. And whoſoever hath ſeriouſly conſidered the ſeditious and tumultuous behaviour of the Sectaries amongſt us for theſe four, or five, laſt years, ever ſince the breaking out of the Popiſh Plot; ſurely muſt either be one of the Party himſelf, or elſe muſt apprehend that they had ſome dangerous deſigns in hand. For when the Papiſts threatened the life of the King, and the deſtruction of our Religion, who would have imagined but that the other Diſſenters, who pretend to be ſuch furious Zealots againſt Popery, and ſuch irreconcileable enemies to Antichriſt, would at that time eſpecially have bent all their forces againſt *Rome*, and have expoſed the deviliſh Doctrines of that Church concerning Equivocation, the Pope's Abſolving Subjects from

from their Oaths of Allegeance, and Excommunicating, Depoſing and Murthering Kings, and the like? Theſe would have been worthy Subjects for the pens of Proteſtants. But inſtead of this, whilſt the Papiſts threaten us in the face with a damnable Plot, the other Diſſenters at the very ſame time charge us in the Rear; and, as if they were glad of ſuch an opportunity to ſerve his Holineſs, with a great deal more than ordinary fury and bitterneſs fall foul upon the Church of *England*: and I am very confident that within theſe four laſt years they have written more ſeditious and infamous Pamphlets againſt his Majeſty, our Biſhops and Clergy, and our Church as it is by Law eſtabliſhed, than in any four years beſides ſince the late Rebellion. And now who, that hath but half an eye in his head, can chuſe but ſee and conclude from ſuch circumſtances as theſe, that the Church of *England* is a greater eye-ſore to theſe men than that of *Rome*; and that the two main Ceremonies with which their tender Conſciences are chiefly offended are Monarchy and Epiſcopacy: the latter of which Chriſt will undoubtedly continue in his Church even unto the end of the World, and I hope he will

will preſerve both of them as long in this Land from the rage and violence of unreaſonable and wicked men. I ſay, who that hath impartially conſidered theſe things could expect any thing leſs than ſome treaſonable Plot from ſuch reſtleſs *Troublers of our Iſrael*; and that they that had taken all this pains by their factious Writings and Diſcourſes to *encourage themſelves in an evil matter*, as they had begun, ſo they would go on likewiſe with the Traytors in my Text, and ſoon after *commune of laying ſnares privily, and ſay, Who ſhall ſee them?*

But the Pſalmiſt purſues them yet farther, and in the next words ſets forth their indefatigable induſtry, and the utmoſt efforts of their diligence and ſubtilty in labouring to effect their deſigns. *They ſearch out iniquities; they accompliſh a diligent ſearch: both the inward thought of every one of them and the heart is deep.* After they have *communed of laying ſnares*, of contriving a Plot, their next buſineſs is to conſult together how to manage it and carry it on with all poſſible ſecrecy and ſecurity. And for this end, before ever they offer to ſtrike a blow, they draw up an exact

exact Scheme and Platform of their whole work, aſſign to every man his particular Office and Station, and agree, to every little punctilio, in what order and method to proceed, that their Conſpiracy may be ſure not to miſcarry. Thus *they ſearch out iniquities.* And if ever any Traytors did ſo, certainly ours that were concerned in this late Plot did it to the height: *They accompliſhed a diligent ſearch; they compaſſed both Sea and Land to gain Proſelytes,* and had their Agents in *Holland,* as well as in *England* and *Scotland; and both the inward thought of every one of them and the heart was deep.*

How cunningly they had laid their deſigns the King hath acquainted us in his Declaration; by which we may ſee how far their malice extended; that they aimed not their Blow at his Majeſty onely, but at all his Loyal Subjects, at all that were friends to him and the Church, and were reſolved not to ſtay their hands from ſhedding bloud, untill they had thoroughly purged the Nation both of Loyalty and Religion.

And now we are come to the laſt Scene of this bloudy Tragedy; a Scene that muſt neceſſarily end in the death either of the Innocent

Innocent or of the Guilty, either of the Traytors or of the King. They ſay, and are reſolved that the King ſhall die: but God ſaith, and hath decreed, that it ſhall be themſelves. They deſign to ſhoot Bullets at their Sovereign, but God determins to prevent them by ſhooting an Arrow at them themſelves: And ſo I come to the ſecond part of my Text, which is,

God's gratious deliverance from this danger that threatened us. *But God ſhall ſhoot at them with an arrow; ſuddenly ſhall they be wounded. So they ſhall make their own tongue to fall upon themſelves: all that ſee them ſhall flee away. There are many devices in a man's heart*, ſaith Solomon; *nevertheleſs the counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand.* Prov. 19. 21. Certainly the devices of theſe Traytors of ours were many and bloudy: Their part was Malice and Cruelty; but God's part is Mercy and Juſtice met together: to us Mercy, whom he hath delivered; Juſtice to them, whom he hath confounded, and *ſnared in the work of their own hands.* They had found out ſo convenient a place for the execution of their Treaſon, that had the King come by that way according to their expectation,

it

it had been morally impoſſible for him to have made an eſcape; but he muſt have run directly into the jaws of Death. But *nevertheleſs the counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand.* The Perſons of Kings are ſacred: they have their Guard in Heaven as well as upon Earth, and *God* himſelf *ſtands in the congregation of Princes.* And though ſometimes for the ſins of a wicked people whom he hath a deſign to puniſh he permits even good Kings to fall by the hands of the Sons of *Belial*; yet for one treaſonable Plot that he ſuffers to take effect he diſappoints many; to ſhew how tender he is over the Perſons of his Vicegerents, and that Kings are the particular care and charge of his Providence. And never did this Providence of his more clearly and gratiouſly manifeſt it ſelf, than in thoſe many ſignal and wonderfull deliverances which he hath wrought for our preſent King, whom he hath ſo often reſcued from the very brink of Deſtruction, and covered with his own hand from the weapons of his enemies, and from the inſtruments of Death. And ſurely he muſt be an Atheiſt, or worſe (if poſſible) one that believes there is a God, but is reſolved to fight againſt him and

flie in his very face; if after all this he can either plot or ſpeak evil againſt him whom Heaven it ſelf hath ſo plainly declared to be its Favourite. But never did the hand of God more viſibly appear in his preſervation, than it did in the diſcovery and diſappointment of this late helliſh Conſpiracy. When the Traytors had gotten all things in a readineſs, and waited onely for the fatal hour: when they had *laid* their *ſnares* ſo *privily*, and contrived their Plot ſo ſtrong and ſure (as they thought) that *vain was the help of Man*; then God himſelf ariſes to protect his Anointed, and to ſcatter his enemies: he *ſhoots at them with an arrow, and ſuddenly are they wounded.* By a gentle and mercifull correction he prevents a moſt ſevere and dreadfull judgment; and by a light affliction of one ſmall and inconſiderable part of the Nation he preſerves the whole from a moſt lamentable deſtruction. By a ſudden (though a very auſpicious and happy) Fire he drives away the King from his Recreations to make an eſcape for his Life, and ſo defeats and blaſts all the deſigns of the Traytors. This diſappointment ſtrook ſuch a terrour into their hearts; that although ſome of them

them were ſo hardened in Villany, that they preſumed to proceed in it ſtill, and held farther Meetings and Conſults for the carrying it on, yet others began to tremble, and fear that God fought againſt them (as moſt certainly he did) and ſo *their miſchief would return upon their own head, and their violent dealing would come down upon their own pate*, and they ſhould be ſure to periſh themſelves in the Attempt: And thereupon they begin to think it high time for them to leave off plotting any farther againſt the King's Life, and to provide (if poſſible) for the ſecurity of their own, by ſurrendring themſelves up to his Majeſtie's mercy, and making a full confeſſion and diſcovery of the whole Conſpiracy, to the utter confuſion and ruine of the reſt of their Confederates; ſome of them being thereupon immediately apprehended, and the reſt forced to ſave their lives by flying from the Sword of Juſtice, exactly according to the words of the Pſalmiſt in my Text; *So they ſhall make their own tongue to fall upon themſelves: all that ſee them ſhall flee away.*

And now we have ſeen what theſe bloudy-minded men would have done againſt us, and what God hath done for us; it is highly reaſonable in the next place to bethink our ſelves of our own duty, and to conſider what obligations this great Deliverance which God hath wrought for us hath laid upon us. And for this *David* gives us inſtructions in the remaining part of my Text; *And all men ſhall fear, and ſhall declare the work of God; for they ſhall wiſely conſider of his doing. The righteous ſhall be glad in the Lord, and ſhall truſt in him, and all the upright in heart ſhall glory.* Which words (without any nice diviſion of them) recommend to us in general theſe two Duties. Firſt, A Duty of Thankfulneſs to God; *to conſider wiſely of his doing, to declare his work*, and to praiſe and magnifie his Name for this great and undeſerved mercy which he hath ſhewed toward us. Secondly, A Duty of Caution; to take heed and beware of ſuch manner of men as theſe, that *encourage themſelves in an evil matter*, that *commune of laying ſnares privily*, and labour to diſturb the peace and tranquillity of our Church and Nation by ſtirring up Faction and Sedition amongſt us, and contriving

Plots

Plots and Conſpiracies againſt the Government. *All men ſhall fear.*

Firſt, here is a Duty of Thankfulneſs to God for this gratious Deliverance. This is the duty of this day, to which God hath ſo ſignally obliged us, and which the King in his Name commands us to perform. And whoſoever performs it not ſincerely and cordially, moſt humbly and devoutly offering up to the Divine Majeſty the ſacrifice of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, ſurely hath neither any true Religion nor Loyalty in his heart; but in contempt both of God and the King, doeth what lies in his power to pull down a Curſe inſtead of a Bleſſing upon himſelf and the whole Kingdom. For where God ſows plentifully he expects to reap ſo too: and when he beſtows upon us extraordinary favours, it is but juſt that our gratefull ſenſe and acknowledgment of them ſhould be, as far as is poſſible, anſwerable. And he can be no better than an enemy to his King and Countrey that will not acknowledge the diſcovery and diſappointment of this helliſh Plot to have been a peculiar and extraordinary demonſtration of the Divine Goodneſs toward us. 'Tis a Mercy that hath continued

ed to us as great a Bleſſing as we can deſire; and has delivered us from as dreadfull a Judgment as we could fear. A Mercy that hath preſerved our Church from being made the ſecond time a Den of Thieves, that would have eſtabliſht Schiſm and Hereſie among us by a Law; and given us as fair a Plea for Damnation, as ever we had for our Liberty and Property. A Mercy that hath freed us from the heavy Curſe of having *the Kingdom of God taken away from us*; and inſtead thereof hath confirmed that Kingdom unto us, and hath ſettled amongſt us (I hope ſurer and firmer than ever) the beſt Religion under the happy government and protection of one of the beſt of Kings. I ſpeak not this in flattery; but as a truth of which I am ſo confident, that I make no doubt but that the very diſſatisfied party of the Nation themſelves, if they look round about, cannot name any one King now reigning in Chriſtendom whom they would rather have to rule over them than He under whoſe Government they are at the preſent ſo reſtleſs and uneaſie. But the truth is, they would have no King at all, but a Commonwealth: and ſo it is a plain caſe, that if our Saviour himſelf

himſelf (as the Fifth-Monarchy-men dream) ſhould come down from Heaven *incognito*, and reign over perſons of ſuch Principles as theſe, he would meet with as bad entertainment amongſt them, as he did amongſt the Scribes and Phariſees. They would be ſure to treat him with Libels and Lampoons, and endeavour to perſwade the people that he intended to introduce Popery and Arbitrary Government. If then ever any Nation had, certainly we have reaſon to ſay with *Iſrael*, *If the Lord himſelf had not been on our ſide; if the Lord himſelf had not been on our ſide when men roſe up againſt us; they had ſwallowed us up quick, when they were ſo wrathfully diſpleaſed at us. But praiſed be the Lord who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth.* Since God hath been pleaſed to ſtretch out his omnipotent Arm to defend us, and to preſerve our Liberty, our Lives and Fortunes, and (which ought to be dearer to us than they all) our Religion from the fanatick and brutiſh rage and fury of the worſt and moſt inexcuſable generation of Schiſmaticks that ever infeſted the Church of Chriſt; if we pour not out our hearts in the devouteſt praiſe, and adoration, and thanks to our Almighty Deliverer;

verer; ſurely we are the moſt ungratefull wretches that ever received any favour from Heaven. The Pſalmiſt tells us here in my Text, that to praiſe and magnifie the Name of God for ſuch a Deliverance as this that he hath wrought for us is a piece of Wiſedom: *For*, ſaith he, *they ſhall wiſely conſider of his doing:* and then not to doe it muſt neceſſarily be an evident demonſtration of Folly. And therefore whoſoever neglects the duty of this day, and refuſes to *give unto God the honour that is due unto his Name*, proclaims himſelf to be a Fool, and that in the worſt ſenſe: either an Atheiſtical fool, *that regards not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands*; or elſe a Rebellious fool, that in his heart favours the deſign of the Traytors, and inwardly grieves and repines at the Goodneſs of God that hath diſappointed it. If then we deſire to eſcape the juſt imputation of Folly and Sin, let us all this day *wiſely conſider of God's doing, and declare his work*. And that we may doe it wiſely indeed, let us be carefull to praiſe him (as our Church teaches us to pray that we may) *not onely with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our ſelves to his Service.* The Son of *Sirach* tells us,

us, that *Praiſe is not ſeemly in the mouth of a Sinner: But if we utter Praiſe in Wiſedom, then the Lord will proſper it.* Ecclus 15. 9. 10. And ſo ſaith *David* in my Text; *The righteous ſhall be glad in the Lord, and ſhall truſt in him; and all the upright in heart ſhall glory.* Let us therefore this day make a new Covenant with the Lord our God to walk in his ways, and to keep his Commandments. Let us ſearch and examine our hearts narrowly; and cleanſe and purifie them, that there may be no *accurſed thing* in them to defile our Sacrifice, and to render the Tribute of our Praiſe unpaſſable in the Court of Heaven. Thus if we doe, God that hath hitherto protected us will protect us ſtill, and ſcatter our enemies that delight in bloud. But if we doe otherwiſe, with that Rod which he hath at this time onely ſhewed us in great Mercy to affright us into Obedience, and with which he hath once already moſt ſeverely chaſtiſed us, he will e'er long in his juſt Anger daſh us in pieces. I ſhall conclude this Point with the Prophet *Samuel*'s Advice to the people of *Iſrael*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 24, 25. *Onely fear the Lord, and ſerve him in truth with all your heart; for conſider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye ſhall ſtill doe wickedly,*

ye ſhall be conſumed, both ye and your King. And ſo I proceed to the ſecond duty recommended to us in theſe laſt words of my Text: and that is

A Duty of Caution, to take heed of ſuch men as theſe that *encourage themſelves in an evil matter*, and labour to diſturb the peace and tranquillity of our Church and Nation, by ſtirring up Faction and Sedition amongſt us, and contriving Plots and Conſpiracies againſt the Government. *All men ſhall fear.* This very counſel St. *Paul* gives to the *Romans*; and with great importunity begs of them that they would receive it and follow it. Rom. 16. 17, 18. *Now I beſeech you, Brethren, mark them which cauſe Diviſions and Offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are ſuch ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly; and by good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple.* And 2 *Tim.* 3, 6. he tells us that *of this ſort are they which creep into houſes and lead captive ſilly women laden with ſins, led away with divers luſts.* And the ſame caution our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf gives us, Matth. 7. 15. *Beware of falſe Prophets, which come to you in ſheeps*

ſheeps cloathing; but inwardly they are ravening wolves. One would think that it ſhould be altogether needleſs to put us in mind of ſuch a Caution as this, who have had ſufficient experience of the curſed Hypocriſie and Cruelty of ſuch falſe Prophets as theſe; who have ſeen their religious Vizards pluckt off, and having firſt been gulled and deluded by their fair pretences in their ſheeps clothing, have afterwards been ſorely wounded and torn by their wolves teeth. One would think that, if we have any conſideration of what we have ſeen and ſuffered from them already by the very ſame ſtrategems which they now make uſe of, we might eaſily diſcern that they are ſtill carrying on the Good Old Cauſe, and under colour of Religion and Reformation are contriving how to take, not the Kingdom of Heaven, but that of their lawfull Sovereign, by force: and that notwithſtanding all their loud Clamours, and pretended Zeal againſt Popery, they mightily contribute towards the introducing it, whilſt they build upon that very foundation which the Jeſuits have laid; and are moſt helpfull Servants to his Holineſs, and Journeymen to Antichriſt. For though the

learned Dr. *Stillingfleet* contents himſelf to ſay, * *That there are ſtrong probabilities that the Jeſuits were the firſt that preached down Epiſcopacy, and the Liturgy and Ceremonies of the Church of* England, *ſince the full ſettlement of the Reformation in Queen* Elizabeth's *Reign:* yet he hath proved the matter ſo clearly, that methinks any man may ſafely ſay, That it is unqueſtionably true. And that unfortunate Game which the Jeſuits firſt ſtarted hath ever ſince been moſt eagerly purſued by our Proteſtant Diſſenters; and that to ſo fatal a purpoſe, that they have once already by this means laid three Kingdoms weltering in bloud. And that they have not yet quenched their thirſt this laſt Conſpiracy is a ſufficient evidence. And therefore whoſoever talks hotly againſt Popery, and yet is a favourer of the other Sectaries, muſt either be a perſon that out of ſome hopes of mending his condition deſires an alteration in the Government; or elſe one of thoſe eaſie, unthinking people that are led captive (they know not why, nor wherefore) by thoſe Mountebanks in Divinity that creep into Houſes, and lie in wait to deceive unſta-

* *Preface to his Hiſtory of the Separation.*

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ble ſouls. The Devil never doeth ſo much miſchief as when he transforms himſelf into an Angel of light: and Treaſon and Rebellion is never like to be ſo ſucceſsfull, as when it is carried on in Maſquerade, and cloaks it ſelf under a Form of Godlineſs. For all men are naturally apt to think well of perſons of a ſtrict life and converſation; and indeed Chriſtian charity obliges us to doe ſo, untill we have very good reaſon to alter our opinion: and when we have ſuch reaſon, he that hath commanded us to *be harmleſs as Doves*, and to wrong no man ſo much as in Word or Thought, hath commanded us alſo to *be wiſe as Serpents*, to *beware of wolves in ſheeps cloathing*; and that we may be ſo, he hath inſtructed us how to know them; even *by their fruits:* that is, by the Doctrines which they teach and practiſe. And to my knowledge there are as deviliſh, and treaſonable, Doctrines to be found at this day in the Writings of ſome of the Presbyterians, and Independents, and other Sectaries, that in the late Rebellion paſſed for Saints among their own Party (and they that are yet living of them do ſo ſtill) as I believe any man can ſhew in the worſt of the Jeſuits. And if theſe things

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be ſo, either ſuch men are Cheats; or elſe the Goſpel it ſelf is falſe that threatens them that doe ſuch things with Damnation. Therefore, Brethren, let us be both charitable and wiſe; ſo charitable, as to grieve for theſe mens ſins, and to pray heartily for their converſion; and ſo wiſe, as not to be ſeduced by their Doctrine, nor caught in their ſnares. But while they run from Chriſt into ſeditious and ſchiſmatical Meetings, let us run towards him; even into *the habitation of his houſe and the place where his Honour dwells*, praying always for the Peace of *Jeruſalem*, and for the Proſperity of that Church which they labour to deſtroy, humbly beſeeching God ſtill to protect and defend it from the open Violence, and ſecret Malice of all its Enemies; that neither Popery, nor Fanaticiſm, nor the Gates of Hell may ever be able to prevail againſt it; but that it may flouriſh as long as the Sun and Moon endure.

Which God grant, &c.

F I N I S.